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SECRET

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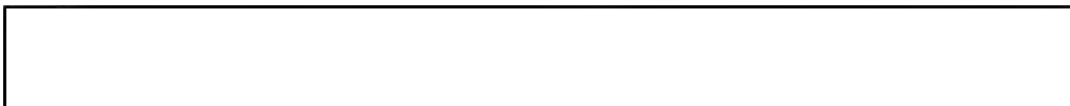
CONTENTS

USSR-CHINA-US: Moscow publicly objects to President Nixon's planned visit to Peking. (Page 1)

UK-MALTA: London is pressing its NATO partners for financial assistance to meet Maltese demands. (Page 2)

SUDAN: Numayri's forces apparently are in control. (Page 4)

25X6



SECRET

USSR-CHINA-US: Moscow has openly voiced its antipathy to President Nixon's planned visit to Peking but has not indicated that it plans any immediate countermoves.

The USSR issued its first authoritative comment on the planned visit yesterday in a Pravda article by "I. Alexandrov"--a pseudonym employed to indicate high-level endorsement. The article expressed some of the Kremlin's worst fears concerning improved Chinese-US relations but softened the impact by attributing many of them to foreign sources. Moscow suggested, however, that both Washington and Peking are seeking to bring pressure on the USSR.

The article stressed that the Kremlin still hopes to improve relations with the US and China. It implied that Moscow would not let the Sino-US dialogue interfere with current negotiations with either party but said that any attempts to extract concessions indicated "a loss of touch with reality."

Although Moscow said it was reserving judgment on future developments, it added in a key passage that it must take its worst suspicions into account in determining future policy. In particular, fear was expressed that the Chinese-US move might lead to a "political combination" directed against the USSR, but Moscow did not suggest what actions it might take to prevent such a development.

In temporizing on its future course, the Soviet leadership seems uncertain over just how far and fast Sino-US relations will develop. One official, although acknowledging the importance of the planned visit, has said the Soviets will want to take a "long, cool look" at its ramifications. Some officials are hoping that Taipei will remain a major obstacle to Sino-US ties.

25X1

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UK-MALTA: London is pressing its NATO partners for financial assistance to meet Maltese demands for increased aid in return for a continued British military presence on the island.

The British have informed the North Atlantic Council (NAC) that Prime Minister Mintoff has offered two proposals for a new UK-Malta defense arrangement. One involves a "wholly exclusive defense arrangement" that would allow the UK to retain its present veto power over third country use of Maltese facilities in exchange for an annual payment of \$72 million. The other proposal consists of a "less exclusive arrangement," costing \$48 million annually, under which Valletta would have the power to grant use of its harbors and airfields to any country except members of the Warsaw Pact. Mintoff also told the British that although NATO must leave the island, the allies could contribute toward London's payment to Malta. Valletta, however, will not count bilateral development aid from NATO members as part of the payment it is seeking from the UK.

London has asked the other Allies to make known their position on the principle of a NATO contribution to Malta and how much each would be willing to offer. Although NATO Secretary General Brosio is dubious about the chances of a special financial contribution, he has agreed to hold a NAC meeting on Wednesday to discuss the British request. The British representative to NATO has indicated that London would like to offer Mintoff an annual payment of \$24 million, of which the UK would pick up somewhat less than half. London will ask for a firm response by 5 August so that it can resume negotiations with Valletta. The level of annual UK aid up to now has been about \$12 million.

Mintoff, who last week rejected the UK's initial offer of \$12 million annually, said that if his demands are not met quickly, British forces

26 Jul 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

2

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

would have to be withdrawn and he would turn elsewhere for aid. The UK representative to NATO has told the Allies that during a recent visit to London, Libyan Deputy Prime Minister Jallud informed Foreign Secretary Home that Tripoli would be willing to contribute up to \$60 million annually to keep the Maltese economy going if the UK proved unwilling to do so.

25X1

26 Jul 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

3

SECRET

SUDAN: Khartoum was generally quiet yesterday as Numayri's forces appear to have gained control over the country.

Khartoum airport was reopened for civilian traffic on Saturday, although the country remains under a state of emergency and a dusk to dawn curfew. Minor gun battles were reported over the weekend, and the government continued to round up the rebels.

The machine-gunning of some 30 soldiers, including a number of senior officers, by the junta during the countercoup may have set the stage for bloody reprisals against the Communists. The predominantly Moscow-oriented Sudan Communist Party, with a membership estimated in late 1970 at between 5,000 and 10,000, has dominated the organized labor movement and has had a powerful influence on the press, student groups, and professional organizations. The semiofficial Cairo daily al-Ahram, citing Sudanese sources, stated that the coup against Numayri had been masterminded by the secretary general of the Sudan Communist Party, Abd-al-Khaliq Mahjub, from the safety of the Bulgarian Embassy where he had fled after escaping from Sudanese authorities last month. According to al-Ahram most of the coup leaders were opportunists used by the party, which hoped to get rid of them once it gained control.

In a press interview on Saturday night Numayri said that 400 persons, including 100 army officers, were involved in the coup against his regime, and he revealed that six military tribunals had been set up to try the accused. Thus far, however, only eight persons, including former interior minister Faruq Hamdallah who was taken from the BOAC plane in Libya, have been executed. The fate of the other leader taken from the BOAC plane, Babakr al-Nur, is not known.

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SECRET

Sudan broke off diplomatic relations with Iraq on Saturday, and Numayri has charged the ruling Iraqi Baath Party with participating in the plot against his regime. Numayri has also announced that in January Sudan will join the planned Federation of Arab States.

25X1

26 Jul 71

Central Intelligence Bulletin

5

SECRET

25X6

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